



CMEAA
COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN
AMERICAN AFFAIRS
M I C H I G A N

Meeting Minutes
September 8th, 2016, 12:00 P.M.
Arab American & Chaldean Council
363 W. Big Beaver
Suite 300
Troy, MI 48084

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

Manal Saab, Chair
Sharif Hussein, 2nd Vice-Chair
Lina Harajli, Treasurer
Suzanne Sukkar, Secretary
Mariam Bazzi, Trustee

Bing Goei, Ex-Officio
Dave Abdallah
Haifa Fakhouri
Adel Mozip
Abe Munfakh

Excused: Wendy Acho, Michael Romaya, Helen Habib, Bishr Al-Ujayli, Susan Dabaja, Fay Beydoun

Staff: Mike Zimmer-Governor's Cabinet Director, Nicholas Payne-GOV, Ron Robinson-Assistant Attorney General, Nancy Short-LARA, Raya Fares-CMEAA Coordinator

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Manal Saab at 12:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Harajli moved to accept the minutes of January 28, 2016. Motion supported by Commissioner Hussein. Motion passed unanimously.

III. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Saab reflected on the 15th anniversary of September 11 and the effect it has had not only on our country, but also our community.

"I know that for all of us here today – and in fact, for all Americans – September 11, 2001 forever changed our world. What's most shocking of that horrific Tuesday morning was not the unthinkable diabolical method used to attack us. Or the scope and magnitude of the attacks.

But that -- it was our way of life that was attacked, a life that embraces freedom and democracy and allows us to worship freely and to look differently.

It is freedom that still makes the United States of America one of the most desirable places on this planet to live. Let us never forget the American spirit, which burns in all of us – that way of life, which makes this the greatest nation on Earth. 911 is etched in our hearts and in our souls as we continue to move forward in the pursuit of happiness, and defense of liberty for all. God bless America.”

IV. LARA/MONA DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Director Goei elaborated on the success of the Michigan International Talent Search (MITS) program and invites all commissioners to participate in the MITS program by hiring international talent.

Director Goei thanks CMEAA for the press release on the contributions immigrants have made to the State of Michigan.

Director Goei updated the commission on the Patriots and Peacemakers Exhibit, which is to be on display in Lansing for 3 months starting April 2017. The exhibit is to be housed either at the Michigan Historical Library or Lansing Community College.

MOTION: Commissioner Bazzi moves to defer the exhibit location to LARA's judgment, in coordination with Coordinator Raya Fares. Motion supported by Commissioner Fakhouri. Motion passed unanimously.

Director Zimmer updated the commission on the state of refugees in Michigan. He notes that with such an influx, a number of barriers have resulted such as lack of housing and transportation, but reassures the commission that the State is fully committed to welcoming refugees.

V. ACTION ITEM: State Department Visit

Chair Saab discussed the opportunity for CMEAA to sponsor a visit by USAID Assistant Deputy Administrator Mona Yacoubian on Friday, September 23.

MOTION: Commissioner Munfakh moves to sponsor a visit by USAID Assistant Deputy Administrator Mona Yacoubian's. Motion supported by Commissioner Bazzi. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. ACTION ITEM: MEA Michigan Economic and Demographic Study

Coordinator Raya Fares discussed a CMEAA initiative to conduct a Middle Eastern American Impact Study. One proposal was received from University of Michigan, Dearborn.

MOTION: Commissioner Munfakh moves to create a committee chaired by Commissioner Fakhouri that includes Commissioner Harajli & Commissioner Bazzi to initiate, by working with the State of Michigan, an RFP for a Middle Eastern American Economic and Demographic Impact Study. This committee will be given full responsibility to review proposals and set forth recommendations to CMEAA at large. Commissioner Hussein supports the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Coordinator Raya Fares discussed findings from the initial three town hall meetings. Commission was reminded about upcoming town hall meetings in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids and encouraged commissioners to hold a town hall in their area.

VIII. MAAPAC FINDINGS

Coordinator Raya Fares presented MAPAAC findings to the commission. She also discussed her goal of utilizing the findings upon completion of CMEAA town hall tour to replicate MAPAAC toolkit with tools catered to Middle Eastern American community.

IX. PNAE MICHIGAN FINAL REPORT

Director Bing Goei presented to the commission the PNAE final report and highlighted the contribution of Middle Eastern Americans in Michigan. Director Goei thanked CMEAA for the press release supporting the PNAE report.

X. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

XI. OLD BUSINESS: PATRIOTS AND PEACEMAKERS EXHIBIT

Director Goei presented Patriots and Peacemakers Exhibit during Director's Update.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Saab invited all commissioners to save the date of September 14th, 2017 from 2:00PM – 8:00PM for the Ethnic Commission Reception and Dinner.

Commissioner Fakhouri invited the commission to attend the ACC Gala on September 17th.

Commissioner Bazzi invited the commission to attend the Arab American Political Action Committee Banquet on October 26th at Bint Jebail Cultural Center.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m. by Chair Saab.



Suzanne K. Sukkar, Secretary



Manal B. Saab, Chair